

What is conscious consumerism and how to embrace it as an entrepreneur?

One of the most important aspects for long-term business success is to be able to change with the times and offer services to customers that may shift with people's sensibilities. In today's world, that means providing goods and services that represent increased consideration for their environmental and social impact, from the finished article to the sourcing of materials.

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78% of consumers say that a sustainable lifestyle is important to them, so businesses must do their best to align with these values. While it is the responsible thing to do, this type of response is largely due to the increase in conscious consumerism, where customers will research how socially responsible a company and its products are.

As an entrepreneur, conscious consumerism represents a challenge but also an opportunity to find alternative solutions to your business processes and practices. Let's take a closer look at conscious consumerism and what this means for you as a business owner.

What is conscious consumerism?

Whether it's called conscious consumerism, ethical consumerism or green consumerism, the important element to focus on is the belief that people are shopping in a way that makes a positive contribution to society and / or the environment.

Those who look to engage in conscious consumerism are not simply taking products at their face value, although this is also important, but they are looking further into a company's actions and opting to spend their money elsewhere if they don't feel like the brand aligns with their values.

A conscious consumer will ask themselves if purchasing a particular product is even necessary, followed by researching the companies that supply and make those particular goods to see which is providing the most similar service for what they are looking for.

What does this mean for businesses?

With 56% of Europeans considering themselves to be conscious consumers, businesses must ensure they offer what these customers are looking for or risk missing out. This increased level of conscious consumerism means that companies must find solutions to ensure their services, goods and supply chains are in alignment.

But while in the past a customer may have had no interest in your supply chain, today's conscious consumer wants to know as much as possible. You don't have to go as far as publishing your accounts or every decision you've ever made but sharing some more information about your supply chain is important.

That is where your company website becomes a key tool in the adoption of cleaner and greener processes or products. Brands can showcase their commitment to environmental, social and governance (ESG) through their website, outlining their environmental policy and explaining how they have reduced their carbon footprint.

The importance of personalising your website

Conscious consumerism is a concerted effort by customers to move away from soulless businesses that put profits before all else and, as an entrepreneur or small business owner, it is critical to avoid coming across as a cold or callous corporation. That is where personalisation helps make your company website and customer communications stand out and gives consumers more of what they are looking for.

Digital marketing experts, *Artemis Marketing*, explain, “It’s almost impossible to grow your business without first building trust with your customers.” With many customers checking into your website *before* making any purchasing decisions, it’s important, then, to ensure that the experience is a positive and memorable one for your visitors.

For some practical website personalisation tips, Artemis Marketing suggests, “Tailor your landing pages to the stage of the user journey each customer is at, their geolocation and even offers that are relevant to their search history.” Adding, “What pages have their views; what products have they purchased recently; have they clicked on ads in the past? This is all valuable data you can use to create bespoke landing pages tailored to them”.

Looking for areas of improvement

To make any operational improvements that ensures your company appeals to conscious consumers you must first understand what your carbon footprint is. Environmental audits are an effective way to measure the environmental impact of your operations and to identify where possible changes can be made to improve upon.

As a business owner, however, there is a difficult balance to be found where you are showing that you are making positive changes for the

benefit of the environment and society but you also need to consider the real business implications of these changes. It's not as simple as finding green technology or suppliers to appease customers and then everything will be okay. It is also true that new and evolving businesses are investing more and adding priority to non-financial values.

This can lead to sustainability and staff wellbeing at the core of a business becoming the norm yet there is still a transition period for most.

Furthermore, other businesses may not be able to justify the change at all, while companies that ignore the climate crisis may find themselves punished by investors or opportunities for financial assistance limited.

How can a company appeal to conscious consumers?

For entrepreneurs, there are several ways to embrace conscious consumerism, with customer-facing elements and behind the scenes factors to consider. A customer-facing approach to conscious consumerism includes promoting the following aspects (and others like them):

- Using eco-friendly utensils such as coffee cups and cutlery
- Using recyclable or reusable materials
- Providing a repairs service for your products
- Donating a percentage of purchases to charity
- Creating high-quality and long-lasting products
- Reducing and removing any single-use items from your business

You can also alter the way you operate behind the scenes to further aid in your overall environmental contributions. This includes swapping to greener and more environmentally friendly energy sources, promoting sustainable production and materials by cleaning up your supply chain, volunteering or switching to ethical services such as banking, logistics or

design.

Meaningful partnerships and events

You may also wish to participate in international awareness days to help showcase your commitment to sustainability to potential customers, such as *World Environment Day* or *Plastic Free July*. These events can act as launchpads for new company policies to help bring further awareness to the positive changes you are trying to make.

Furthermore, partnering with important organisations in the battle against climate change is another signal to your customers of your intent to provide a conscientious and responsible service or product. Becoming certified by these organisations is another step towards creating an easy choice for customers looking to engage in conscious consumerism.

Once certified you can speak with the organisations to arrange how you can display their logos on your website or digital communications.

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